It will be seen from above figures that there has not been any substantial increase in export of aluminium and its products by the above two manufacturers in 1994-95. The total indigenous production of primary aluminium has been steady. The gap between the local production and demand can be met by imports. Due to high prices of aluminium in the international market currently import of aluminium has been sluggish and the demand for indigenously produced metal has gone up correspondingly. To rectify this, import duty on aluminium was reduced from aroud 40% to 25% ad-valorem in the 1994-95 Budget. It has been further reduced in October, 1994, to a mere 10% ad-valorem. Free import of aluminium and its intermediate products has been permitted under OGL.

In addition, following decisions have been taken to increase production of aluminium in the country on long term basis :

(i) Exemption of aluminium metal and its down stream products from the provisions of compulsory licencing.

(ii) Reduction of excise duty on the metal and extension of MODVAT benefits to the aluminium industry.

(iii) Inclusion of aluminium industry in the list of industries where automatic approval of foreign equity upto 51% is available to enourage foreign investment in this sector.

Ambitious Programme of Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited

1600. SHRI G.Y. KRISHNAN : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) has chalked out an ambitious programme which involves entering into strategic alliances with international companies and penetrating global markets ;

(b) if so, the salient features of its diversification plans; and

(c) how far the Company has succeeded in the exploration of feasibility of gold mining in Ghana and the role likely to be assigned to the Bharat Gold Mines Limited (BGML) in the implementation of the Ghana project ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) and (b) As a part of its diversification plans, the Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) is examining various possibilities such as entering into gold mining operations in Ghana, setting up of joint venture companies in India in collaboration with other public sector undertakings (PSUs) for providing consultancy services in the iron & steel sector, as well a setting up a plant for production of low phosphorus low sulphur pig iron.

(c) KIOCL and Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), another Central PSU have concluded a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 26-2-1994 to jointly explore the possiblilities of gold mining in Ghana and also in other neighbouring countries in Africa. The company proposes to undertake prospecting operations in a deposit identified in Ghana after preliminary investigations. The results of the prospecting would enable the company to take a decision on participation in a joint venture company with BEML in Ghana for mining of gold. KIOCL has availed the services of a geologist from Bharat gold Mines Ltd. (BGML) for undertaking prospecting operations in the area proposed for exploitation in Ghana. However, the entire expenditure on preliminary investigations, propecting/survey etc. will be borne by KIOCL and BEML.

Constitution and Function of Science Advisory Committee

1601. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) the present Constitution and functions of the Science Advisory Commtttee of his Ministry and its deliberations during the last three years;

(b) the specific recommendations/suggestions made by the Committee, particularly relating to the propagation and development of technology and Research and Development in the Iron and Steel industry, and on other aspects during each of the last three years, and steps taken by Government; and